

Historical Geography Research Group



IN THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ RGS-IBG Conference: HGRG-sponsored sessions
- ◆ Practising Historical Geography conference report
- ◆ Work In Progress
- ◆ London Group Seminar Series

COPY FOR NEXT ISSUE

Date for new copy:

25th May 2012

Please send to:

Oliver Dunnett:

O_Dunnett@live.co.uk

Letter from the Chair

Dear HGRG members,

Welcome to this Winter edition of the newsletter. In this newsletter you will find information about the very successful *Practising Historical Geography* workshop, which was held at Oxford University in November. I would like to thank Prof. Jack Langton and Dr. Richard Powell who enabled us to host the event at St John's College. As always, these opportunities to come together as a group are welcomed by postgraduate members and the support of the HGRG community is essential – so my thanks to Georgina Endfield, Alan Lester, Innes Keighren, Stephanie Wyse for their lectures and workshops, and Briony McDonagh for organising the event.

Many HGRG members are looking forward to the forthcoming ICHG in Prague. HGRG are giving £1000 for postgraduate bursaries and requests are flooding in for these. In addition postgraduate students can apply for small bursaries to support fieldwork or conference attendance. The deadline for this is at the end of April, and details can be found on the website.

Over the next year we will be having the HGRG website re-designed. This will be combined with the *Teaching Historical Geographies* resource project which is going to get underway in February. Our aim is to mark the 40th anniversary year with a range of research, teaching and learning activities that celebrate the past and present activities that members are involved with.



HGRG activity at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference will focus on a limited number of sessions to avoid clashes, details of which are on page 5. Although slightly earlier than usual, we will have the AGM at the conference. There will be some places in the committee opening up so please consider if you would like to get involved. More details will be circulated after the committee meets in April.

All best wishes for 2012,

Nicola Thomas

HGRG Chair

HGRG Committee 2011-12

Honorary Chair

Dr. Nicola Thomas
School of Geography,
University of Exeter,
Rennes Drive,
Exeter EX4 4RJ
+44(0) 1392 264449
Nicola.J.Thomas@exeter.ac.uk

Honorary Secretary

Dr. Harriet Hawkins
Institute of Geography &
Earth
Sciences
Aberystwyth University
Llandinam Building
Penglais Campus
Aberystwyth SY23 3DB
+44(0) 1970 622 606
hah7@aber.ac.uk

Honorary Treasurer

Dr. Carl Griffin
School of Geography,
Archaeology and
Palaeoecology,
Elmwood Building,
Queen's University Belfast,
Belfast BT7 1NN
+44 (0)2890 973394
Carl.Griffin@qub.ac.uk

Honorary Research Series Editor

Dr. Alastair Owens
Queen Mary, University of
London
Mile End Road,
London E1 4NS
+44 (0)207882 5401
a.j.owens@qmul.ac.uk



HGRG Practising Historical Geography Conference Report

The 17th Annual *Practising Historical Geography* conference took place at the beginning of November 2011 in St. Johns College, Oxford and was attended by a record number of fifty-three delegates and speakers from eleven different institutions. The conference provides postgraduate students of Historical Geography with a taste of the breadth and vitality of work in the sub-discipline, as well as providing a welcoming environment for students to learn, experiment and expand their own theoretical and methodological skills to further their own research.

As is customary, the day was bookended by two keynote presentations. This year's speakers were Alan Lester (Sussex), whose paper was on the *Humanitarian and Colonial Geographies of George Arthur*, and Georgina Endfield (Nottingham) who spoke on *Tropical Pathologies and Missionary Archives*. Both speakers gave empirically rich, substantive and thought-provoking papers which together demonstrated the diversity of historical sources and approaches available to students. This was further evident in three short presentations given by recent undergraduate dissertation prize winners: Kallum Dhillon's work on philanthropic social housing near King's Cross/St. Pancras, Katariina Makela's on Signe Brander's photography in early-20th century Helsinki, and Rory Hill's work on Francophone Methodism in Jersey. All three of the presentations were remarkable in their clarity, empirical rigour and theoretical insight and showed great prospects for the future of Historical Geography as a whole.

The conference also serves to provide a friendly environment for students to network and converse about their shared experiences of working and studying in Historical Geography. Although partly an informal process which takes place over lunch and refreshments, there is also a dedicated section of the program to opening up such discussions: the postgraduate voices session is a question and answer forum in which current postgraduate students have the chance to listen to recently-completed PhD candidates on all manner of their experiences, from

HGRG Committee 2011-12 (cont.)

Honorary Membership Secretary

Dr. Ruth Craggs
Department of Geography
St Mary's University College
Waldegrave Road
Strawberry Hill
Twickenham TW1 4SX
+44 (0)2082404011
craggsr@smuc.ac.uk

Honorary Conference Officer

Dr. Briony McDonagh
School of Geography,
University of Nottingham,
Nottingham NG7 2RD
+44 (0) 115 67153
briony.mcdonagh@nottingham.ac.uk

Honorary Web Editor

Prof. Catherine Brace
School of Geography,
University of Exeter in
Cornwall
Tremough Campus,
Treliever Road, Penryn,
Cornwall, TR11 9EZ
+44 (0) 1326 371810
c.brace@exeter.ac.uk

Honorary Newsletter Editor

Dr. Oliver Dunnett
School of Geography,
University of Nottingham,
Nottingham NG7 2RD
+44(0)7791 742 850
O_Dunnett@live.co.uk



the collecting and collating of empirical material and getting through the 'writing up' process, to publishing and career options. This year's speakers were Caroline Cheeseman (Oxford) who spoke about her completed PhD thesis on the Changing Land, Law and Life on Cranborne Chase, 1786-1830, and the move from academia into museum and educational work, and John Law (Westminster), whose thesis explored the development of the arterial road network around London in the inter-war period, and his advice on getting published and securing a lectureship. The openness of the forum was, no doubt, of real value to those in attendance.

In a practical sense, the conference helps to equip students with a set of methodological tools for working with historical sources. This was facilitated through two small-group workshops delivered by Innes Keighren (Royal Holloway) and Stephanie Wyse (RGS-IBG), who explored the use of autobiographical positioning in historical traditions of travel writing and the value of historical records at death, respectively. The concentration of small-scale methods workshops, postgraduate voices and keynote papers provided postgraduates in Historical Geography a unique experience to consider the entire process of historical geographical knowledge production, from the practice of working with historical sources and *doing* historical geography through to thinking about how these kinds of empirical materials can speak to wider theoretical interests. In short, the conference provided an opportunity for attendees to contemplate the process of *becoming* Historical Geographers. It is with this in mind, and on behalf of everyone in attendance, that we would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all the speakers, to Carl Griffin (QUB) for chairing some of the sessions and to Briony McDonagh (Nottingham), whose adept organisational skills and sheer dedication has, again, made the HGRG Practising Historical Geography conference a tremendous success.

Jake Hodder and Kim Ross (HGRG Postgraduate Committee Members)

HGRG Committee 2011-12 (cont.)

Dissertation Prize Coordinator

Dr. Innes Keighren
Department of Geography,
Royal Holloway, University of
London, Egham Hill,
Egham TE200EX
+44 (0)1784 443570
innes.keighren@rhul.ac.uk

E-circulation Officer

Dr. Lowri Jones
School of Geography,
University of Nottingham,
Nottingham NG7 2RD
+44 (0) 115 84 68412
lowri.jones@nottingham.ac.uk

Teaching & Learning Officer

Dr Edwin Aiken
School of Geographical
Sciences
University of Bristol
University Road
Bristol, BS8 1SS
ej_aiken@hotmail.co.uk

Postgraduate Committee Member

Jake Hodder,
School of Geography,
University of Nottingham,
Nottingham NG7 2RD
lgxjh@nottingham.ac.uk

Postgraduate Committee Member

Kim Ross
Department of Geography
and Geomatics, University of
Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8QQ
k.ross.3@research.gla.ac.uk



RGS-IBG Annual International Conference (3rd-5th July 2012, University of Edinburgh)

The following sessions are to be sponsored by HGRG. Information is taken from the latest calls for papers. More information is available on the RGS website: www.rgs.org/AC2012

1) New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography

Organisers: Kim Ross (University of Glasgow) and Jake Hodder (University of Nottingham)

This session aims to provide an informal and relaxed forum for postgraduates undertaking research in historical geography to present at a major conference. Building upon past successful HGRG postgraduate sessions, it is hoped that a friendly and supportive atmosphere will produce stimulating debates on the issues raised and provide postgraduates with helpful feedback on their work. There is no chronological or geographical limit to papers and they can be variously theoretical, empirical and/or methodological in orientation.

2) Historical Geographies of Creative Economies

Organisers: Nicola Thomas (University of Exeter) and Doreen Jakob (University of Exeter)

This session offers an opportunity to engage with historically and geographically sensitive analysis of creative economies. While much of today's research explores the current and future situation of creative industries, this session recognises that much can be learnt through considerations of the past expressions of creative industries. As Knell (2007) reminds us: "one of the besetting sins of creative industries policy-making is its obsession with the new, its insistence that everything is 'changed utterly,' and its seeming ignorance, of its own history". We wish to open up a space for geographers to identify agendas for such historically sensitive research around creative economies, noting the intersections with contemporary studies of creative industries, whilst maintaining a critical perspective on the dangers of presentism within such research. As such the session calls for geographically and historically contextual understandings of creative economies.



3) Geographies of Enthusiasm: Exploration and Fieldwork

Organisers: Hilary Geoghegan (Exeter); Hannah Neate (UcLan); and Ruth Craggs (SMUC)

Exploration is a well-established field of research, with geographers examining the contested histories of colonial exploration (Driver, Heffernan, Livingstone); spaces and



cultures of modern exploration (MacDonald, Matless, Naylor and Ryan); and, more recently, practices of urban exploration (Bennett, Edensor, Garrett). Associated concepts of the 'field' and 'fieldwork' have been the subject of sustained focus in relation to teaching practice (Hall et al., Maguire), researcher positionality (Kobayashi, Dewsbury and Naylor) and lived experience (Lorimer). This session extends these debates by examining notions of exploration and fieldwork in other registers.

Hidden and local histories, enthusiast knowledges, as well as popular and professional practices have emerged as themes worthy of further study in relation to exploration and fieldwork. This session is interested in people, places and cultures that have for various reasons been overlooked, regarded as old-fashioned or too readily classed as mundane, non-spectacular, even 'amateur'. Papers will discuss a culture of exploration that involves romance, revery, memory, as well as political purpose and physical endeavour, and incorporates fieldwork carried out at weekends, on the off-chance or as part of daily life. Focusing on landscapes of exploration in the city, suburbia, and/or the rural, places that are inhabited, cared for and preserved, practices and techniques based upon archaeology, local history and architectural significance, this session offers an opportunity to challenge how geographers have examined people's understandings of the world, their place within it, and their fascination for it.

Please note: A walking tour will accompany this session – putting discussions of exploration and fieldwork into practice. If you're interested in hearing more about the walking tour please send an expression of interest to the email above. This session forms an important part of the organisers' British Academy research project 'cultures of architectural enthusiasm' – please visit this site for more information: <http://conservingc20.wordpress.com/>

4) Decolonisation, professionals and the geographies of expertise

Organisers: Casper Andersen (University of Oxford/University of Aarhus) and Ruth Craggs (St Mary's University College)

Studies of decolonisation have predominantly focused on high politics. The process of decolonisation, however, also evolved changes at other levels including those that were the preserve of colonial professionals in fields such as law, medicine, education, engineering and the sciences. Following work on the geographies of expertise (Kuus) and colonial careering (Lambert and Lester), we invite papers that address connections between decolonisation, professional lives and expert knowledge in order to explore the complex and contested geographies of expertise in decolonisation.

We are interested in exploring the geographies, technologies, and practices of expertise in the decolonisation process. Central concerns may include changes and continuities in the role of expatriate professionals as colonial states became independent nation states; the influence of decolonisation on the position of professions in the (post)imperial 'core' in relation to education, careers, accredited institutions, and with respect to programmes



and ideologies of development; the role non-European experts and professionals in colonial and emerging nation states; comparisons between 'geographies of expertise' in different European empires during decolonisation; and the role of academic knowledge in decolonisation.

By exploring connections between different people, sites, practices and knowledges the panel will broaden understandings of the decolonisation process and contribute to wider debates about histories and geographies of expertise.

5) Hope in a securitised world: geographies and histories of occupation

Organisers: Briony McDonagh (University of Nottingham) and Carl Griffin (Queens University Belfast)

'We the free people of England... agree to ascertain our government to abolish all arbitrary power, and to set bounds and limits both to our Supreme, and all Subordinate Authority, and remove all known Grievances'.

So started An Agreement of the People, the Levellers' 1649 manifesto detailing their democratic demands, and pleas for economic equality and social egalitarianism. Their demands found their purest physical form in the Diggers' colonies, agrarian squatter settlements where all property was 'levelled'. Whilst these occupations were short-lived, crushed by the might of the republican Council of State, their fundamental principles underpinned the American Declaration of Independence and the first French Revolution, and continue to inspire protest today (see Featherstone, 2005). Peace occupations in the 1980s, environmental encampments from the early 1990s, and the recent anti-corporate, anti-cuts and the anti-student fees occupations (Hopkins et al, in press) all pay rich testimony to the persistence of the practice. Critically, these persistences also give hope that against the securitisation and privatisation of shared and public spaces, new solidarities might challenge the exercise of arbitrary power (for which see Blomley, 2004).

Specifically, we want this session to concentrate on the ways in which calls to resist the arbitrary exercise of power in all its forms, and the allied securitisation of space, have played out in the protest practice of occupation. Rather than asking what occupations today can learn from past protests, the session will focus instead on moments, movements and practices of occupation and related attempts to suppress occupation, as well as the ways in which occupations today articulate and mobilise occupations past.

6) Creating Geographical Legacies: The Red Road Legacy Project

Organiser: Jane Jacobs (University of Edinburgh)

The Red Road Flats, comprising six 31-storey point blocks and two 26–28-storey slab blocks were once the tallest residential high-rises in Europe and offered over 1300 dwellings. Built in the 1960s as a forward thinking, cost-effective solution to overcrowding



in Glasgow's slums, they later suffered disinvestment and residualisation. In 2005 the local housing authority announced that the Red Road flats would be demolished to make way for a comprehensive regeneration of the area. This session offers a cultural approach to this process of closure and demolition. Cultural geography has in the past placed considerable emphasis on the making of places and sense of place. But how do these processes and sentiments work in the context of place unmaking? How, in all this process of change, can the vision of Red Road, its history and the many lives lived in it be celebrated and remembered? How are local community development agencies, cultural institutions and demolition professionals ensuring that this time of change is not simply an erasure of the past? Is it possible to generate a lasting Red Road legacy, and what does that legacy comprise? The session will feature scholars, curators, community development workers and artists who have contributed to Glasgow Life's Red Road Legacy Project.

The 'regeneration' of this neighbourhood area requires that Red Road estate be unmade as a landmark, a neighbourhood and a home. While a blow down demolition is fast and spectacular, this instant ending is preceded by years of disassembling activity: disinvestment, decisions about unviability, letting moratoriums, resident relocations, home clearances, system closures, worker lay-offs. So, while housing and home is supposed to be a secure sanctuary, Red Road is an example of housing insecurity in the extreme.

7) Historical Narratives of Climate Security

Organisers: Lucy Veale (University of Nottingham) and Lizzie Rushton (University of Nottingham)

In 2007, the United Nations Security Council held a debate on the security implications of climate change. Those present discussed the possible impacts of climate change on a number of potential conflict drivers: resource scarcities, rising sea levels, population movements in the form of environmental refugees, and disease activity. The message that climate change poses "an immediate growing and grave threat" to security around the world is becoming louder.

As Mike Hulme (2008) has explained, "Geographers are well placed to do the imaginative yet meticulous work of revealing the local roots of climate meanings and in them finding ways of allowing climate to travel and cross scales without losing these essential anchors and narratives". This session explores climate security from both a cultural and historical geographical perspective.



Postgraduate Support Scheme

James Wallis, Exeter University

I am extremely grateful to the HGRG in supporting and enabling me to present my first conference paper. I gave a paper entitled 'Scales of Remembrance: Family History and the First World War' at 'The Great War: From Memory to History' conference, held by the University of Western Ontario in Canada between the 10th and 12th November 2011. The theme of this multi-disciplinary conference dealt with the transition of the First World War from living memory into history. My own paper engaged with the practices of conducting family history research online, the politics and issues at stake when undertaking battlefield tourism, and how the Imperial War Museum plans to harness the power of amateur family history for its 2014 redevelopment programme.

My paper was well received, and alongside my two fellow panel members, we generated a lot of discussion afterwards. My approach as a historical geographer, in a predominantly historian-based event, allowed me to unpack some alternative theoretical perspectives and their implications, before analysing some interviews that I had conducted for the paper. At present, I am incorporating some further feedback I have received and hope to submit an updated version of my paper for journal publication before the end of the year. This opportunity certainly helped me in the early stages of my PhD and I am now planning a new paper based on some archival research for the ICHG in Prague this coming August.

The conference was an extremely enjoyable event, and many of the papers presented were thought-provoking. It also allowed me to meet and discuss a mutual interest in the First World War with a variety of scholars from differing backgrounds. I have kept in touch with several of these individuals, and I hope to involve them in reviewing future pieces of work or collaborating with them to present new research at future conferences



Work In Progress

Cultures of Architectural Enthusiasm and the Twentieth Century Society

Dr Hannah Neate (UCLan), Dr Hilary Geoghegan (Exeter), Dr Ruth Craggs (SMUC)

We have recently started a two year project part-funded by the British Academy investigating the intricacies of architectural enthusiasm. We ask how people experience buildings as a pastime, how sites and buildings are valued and classified as heritage, what role amenity societies play in preserving the recent past, and the complex issues of engaging with enthusiasts.

Throughout the project we will be working in collaboration with the Twentieth Century Society, whose remit is to safeguard the heritage of architecture and design in Britain from 1914 onwards (www.c20society.org.uk). Over the next 18 months, we will be conducting a programme of fieldwork, involving participation in the Society's walking tours and interviews with volunteer guides, staff and supporters in order to understand how they look, see, value, debate and articulate the value of the architecture of the near-recent past.



Images from recent walking tours: Post-War Paddington (left) and Harrow and Wealdstone (right)

By examining cultures of architectural enthusiasm and civic engagement we are also beginning to evaluate the political relevance of voluntarism through direct engagement with volunteers and amenity societies. By the end of the project we want to better understand how the role of amenity societies such as the Twentieth Century Society is subject to shifting political objectives, and the implications this has for the conservation of built heritage. As the chairman of the Heritage Alliance has commented: "We in the heritage sector have been doing the Big Society for a long time, before the Big Society was even a phrase...volunteers are the absolute lifeblood of our sector."

We look forward to discussing the project during our HGRG sponsored session entitled 'Geographies of enthusiasm: exploration and fieldwork' at the RGS-IBG Conference next July where we hope to run a twentieth century Edinburgh walking tour.

In the meantime you can follow our project as it unfolds on our blog, where we already have a couple of write-ups of walks and other events we have participated in: <http://conservingc20.wordpress.com/>. If you would like to receive updates of forthcoming workshops for academics and practitioners interested in architectural history – please email HNeate@uclan.ac.uk.

British Academy Small Grant Reference 15770: (Dr Hannah Neate and Dr Hilary Geoghegan)

LONDON GROUP OF HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHERS

Seminar Programme, Spring Term 2012

GEOGRAPHIES OF KNOWLEDGE

Guest convenor: Innes M. Keighren, Royal Holloway,
University of London

- 17th January 2012 **Heike Jöns** (Loughborough University)
*Research Travel and the Formation of Modern Disciplines in the
University of Cambridge, 1885–1955*
- 31st January 2012 **Rose Marie San Juan** (University College London)
*Memories of Punishment and Ruination: The Continuum of Urban
Space and Early Modern Cabinet Displays of Wax Anatomical
Models*
- 14th February 2012 **Tamson Pietsch** (Brunel University)
The British Academic World, 1880–1939
- 21st February 2012 **Diarmid Finnegan** (Queen's University, Belfast)
Scientific Speech and the Geography of Victorian Oratory
- 6th March 2012 **Heather Ellis** (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
*A Scientific Republic of Letters?: Transnationality and the British
Association for the Advancement of Science, 1870–1945*

These seminars are held on **Tuesdays at 5pm** in the **Bedford Room G37, South Block, Senate House, University of London**. For further details, or to have your name added to our e-mail list, please contact David Lambert (0247 652 3408, D.Lambert@warwick.ac.uk) or Miles Ogborn (020 7882 8926, m.j.ogborn@qmul.ac.uk). We are grateful to the Historical Geography Research Group of the RGS-IBG, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, Kings, UCL, the Open University and the IHR for supporting this series.

Symposium Flyer – Cultures of Decolonisation

30th May 2012
Room 349,
Senate House,
London

**CULTURES OF DECOLONISATION, C 1945-1970
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM**

Cultures of Decolonisation, c.1945-1970

This symposium will bring together scholars with an interest in the cultural practices, performances and material cultures of decolonisation, c.1945-1970

Keynote: Dr Bill Schwarz, QMUL



Grand Hall of the Royal Geographical Society, 1954 (KSI11 p.) & <http://www.5b.com.au/dep/dep/inst/museum/Commonwealth/>

While the problems of 'empire' and 'the postcolonial' have come under increasing scrutiny in recent years, the study of the cultural sites, spaces and social practices of decolonisation is yet in its infancy. This symposium will bring together scholars from a variety of disciplines to explore the role of the literary, visual and built environment in political, economic and social change between 1945 and 1970.

For more information or to submit an abstract (deadline 30th January 2012) please contact Dr Ruth Craggs (St Mary's University College) craggsr@smuc.ac.uk and Dr Claire Wintle (University of Brighton) c.wintle@brighton.ac.uk.

Weblink: <http://commonwealth.sas.ac.uk/events/eventdetails0.html?id=10987>

Jointly organised by:



University of Brighton

St Mary's
University College
Twickenham
London



Institute of
Commonwealth Studies